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INFO RUCNISL/ISLAMIC COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

UNCLAS KUWAIT 000634

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FOR NEA/ARPI

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: KUWAITI CONDEMNATION OF THE AL- ASKARIYA SHRINE  
BOMBING

REF: STATE 28802

¶1. The highest levels of the Kuwaiti Government have condemned the February 22 bombing of the Al-Askariya shrine in Samarra. According to the press, Amir Shaykh Sabah sent a message to Iraqi President Talabani condemning the act and asserting that the targeting of religious monuments and murder of innocent civilians has no relation to Islam. Crown Prince Shaykh Nawaf sent a similar message to Talabani. Prime Minister Shaykh Nasser also condemned the attack and offered the condolences of the Kuwaiti people in a message to Prime Minister al-Jaafari.

¶2. National Assembly Speaker Jassem Al-Khorafi, in a public statement on February 23, said, "Who has carried out this operation intended to sow seeds of discord and cause rifts among the Iraqis and foment sectarianism at this critical time in Iraq." He expressed confidence in Iraq's leaders and predicted, "Such condemned acts done by deviant elements will backfire on them and will lead to solidifying the unity of the Iraqi people."

¶3. Approximately 3,000 Kuwaitis, primarily Shi'a, staged a peaceful demonstration February 23 in front of a Shi'a mosque. Religious leaders and Shi'a Members of Parliament delivered speeches of condemnation and called for restraint. Similar protests are planned for February 24.

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